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Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-third session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Jerry **Kramer** (Canada)

Addendum

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Item 3

Report of the Secretary-General on progress and impact assessment of management improvement measures

1. At its 4th meeting, on 10 June 2003, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Secretary-General on progress and impact assessment of management improvement measures (A/58/70). The Under-Secretary-General for Management, acting as the representative of the Secretary-General, introduced the report and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the report. She underscored that the report comprised a first step towards responding in a rigorous way to the Committee's demand for comprehensive analysis of the progress and impact of management improvement measures. The measures analysed include efforts to eliminate wasteful practices and maximize value for money, and to cut through administrative layers in managing business processes. Her remarks included a commitment to further development of the reporting methodology to capture and summarize direct savings and other tangible improvements.

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Discussion

2. A number of delegations expressed appreciation for the new direction taken in the report, and welcomed the fact that reports were becoming progressively more useful in comparison to earlier years' versions. It was noted that the report of the Secretary-General demonstrated a more quantitative analytical approach than that of previous reports, which had consisted largely of listings of projects. In addition, it was noted that quantitative analysis alone could not fully inform judgement and provide adequate perspective on the management of change; rather, a balance of quantitative and qualitative insights was required. Further, the comment was made that proper presentation of the findings from such analysis would guide legislative decision-making by Member States.

3. The view was stated that the new reporting approach could become a source of good practices, and support the development of systems for monitoring and accountability. It was also noted that it was necessary to continuously track and evaluate the results of management improvement measures in order to ensure that they continue to make progress and achieve their desired impact.

4. Several delegations expressed appreciation that the report was concise, and that its language was straightforward and informative. Some also noted with approval the systematic nature of the report's discussion.

5. On the matter of obstacles to implementation of improvement measures, a view was expressed that the Secretariat's treatment of this topic represented a welcome tone of candour. Delegations expressed concern regarding obstacles described in the report, particularly resistance to change and lack of cooperation among offices. A number of representatives requested that the Secretariat specify remedial steps that would be taken to address the identified obstacles, and report back on this matter in the future.

6. The view was expressed that it was necessary to evaluate continuously the results of management improvement measures in order to keep the measures functioning effectively and also that further efficient and effective management of the Organizat on was indispensable to strengthening the functioning of the United Nations.

7. The view was expressed that, with regard to paragraph 47 of the report, no individual management improvement measure was used for the improvement in geographical distribution, and that a management improvement measure concerning improvement in geographical distribution should be introduced during the future process.

8. The view was expressed that a future update report should include information on what degree of progress the Secretariat has achieved in the management improvement measures.

9. While welcoming the report as a step in the right direction, most representatives strongly emphasized that major enhancements were still needed in order to fully respond to previous mandates. In particular, delegations underlined the critical need for reporting on impact in quantitative, verifiable terms. While noting that the current report set an analytical baseline, representatives expressed strong expectations that future reporting would realize the goal of true impact measurement. The view was put forward that the impact of technology projects

could be measured in terms of number of end-users and financial savings, and impact on culture and knowledge could be measured by surveying the attitude of the staff and/or the opinion of Member States and service users.

10. Several delegations requested clarification regarding the review process that had been applied to the data, and highlighted the need for information in future reports to be verified by an independent party.

11. Several delegations noted with concern the scarcity of information regarding results-based budgeting and financial management, and called for more extensive reporting on this area in the future. Many questions were raised as to the meaning of the flexible financial management arrangements referenced in the document. The representative of the Secretary-General noted that flexibility referred to the new financial rules and regulations that had recently been legislated, which now empower programme managers to exercise discretion within allocated programme budgets while continuing to ensure full accountability.

12. Most delegations welcomed the introduction of the Secretariat's new data warehouse on management improvement measures, the progress and impact reporting system. It was viewed as an innovative and useful tool with the potential to support a broad range of reporting demands, and encouragement was expressed for its continued development. Regarding the information that Project Offices provide their own self-evaluation information on the progress and impact of their initiatives, the view was expressed that due consideration be given to entrusting an oversight body to carry out such evaluation for greater transparency and confidence in the measurement of the Progress and Impact Reporting System's impact and improvement of efficiency in the system.

13. Specific concern was expressed about lack of information on gender balance and geographical distribution, and representatives called for enhanced reporting on these matters.

14. Some delegations noted favourably the inclusion of offices away from Headquarters in the analysis, as well as the incorporation of productivity as a cross-cutting reform theme.

Conclusions and recommendations

15. **The Committee took note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the work in progress towards implementing the Secretary-General's management reform programme (A/58/70).**

16. **The Committee welcomed the implementation by the Department of Management of the Progress and Impact Reporting System to analyse progress related to the implementation of the reform measures. The Committee encouraged the Secretariat to continue and improve further the new approach to reporting on management improvement measures. The Committee recommended that the system include in the future a fuller evaluation and analysis of the implementation of all management improvement measures, specifying remedial steps that would be taken to address the identified obstacles.**

17. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General:

(a) To intensify his examination of cross-cutting issues;

(b) To ensure that there is better cooperation between the Monitoring Section of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Management Policy Office of the Department of Management;

(c) To explore the option of incorporating, as appropriate, the quantitative data of the Progress and Impact Reporting System into future budget submissions with a view to providing Member States a tool for measuring impact of activities.

18. The Committee stressed the need for future reports to provide more analytic information and a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the management reform measures it addresses, and recommended that the General Assembly urge all relevant departments and offices to cooperate fully in the preparation of future reports.

19. The Committee recommended, regarding paragraph 45 on the initiatives in the human resources area concerning staff selection and recruitment, with the introduction of competency-based recruitment, that the Secretary-General continue to take into consideration Article 101 of the Charter concerning the need to pay due regard to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

20. The Committee also recommended, concerning paragraph 51 on the implementation of new policy of mobility requiring rotation between posts, at least every five years, that the Secretary-General fully observe the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly on human resources management reform.

21. The Committee further recommended that future reports include specific information on efficiencies achieved as a result of implementation of reform measures within the United Nations Secretariat.